



# Lone Workers Policy 18/19

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## 1. Introduction

BIOR seeks to protect those staff who work alone and undertakes to, as far as reasonably practicable, minimise the risks to the health and safety of its employees and those who may be affected by their activities.

There are many different situations staff find themselves in regarding lone working, and it would be impractical to address each situation individually.

BIOR acknowledges its duty to make enough provision for the management of health and safety in the workplace and to fully implement the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations by providing the facilities, procedures and resources for a suitable and sufficient management system.

This policy sets out the commitments and arrangements of BIOR for minimising the risk of physical and non-physical assaults against staff, risk of injury and improving overall personal safety and arrangements for lone working.

### 1.1 Definition - Physical and Non-physical Assault

Physical assaults – General Baseline Definition:

“The intentional application of force to the persons of another, without legal justification, resulting in physical injury or personal discomfort.”

Physical assaults include being shoved, pushed, punched, kicked, head-butted, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Non-physical assault – General Baseline Definition:


“The use of inappropriate words or behaviour causing distress and/or constituting harassment.”

It is very difficult to provide a comprehensive description of all types of incidents that are covered under this definition; however, the following examples would be consistent:

- **Offensive language, verbal abuse and swearing which prevents staff from doing their job or makes them feel unsafe**
- **Negative, malicious or stereotypical comments**
- **Invasion of personal space**
- **Brandishing of objects or weapons**
- **Near misses i.e. unsuccessful physical assaults**
- **Threats or risk of serious injury to a member of staff, or visitors**
- **Bullying\*, victimisation or intimidation**
- **Stalking**
- **Spitting**
- **Alcohol or drug fuelled**
- **Unreasonable behaviour and non-cooperation**
- **Any of the above linked to destruction of or damage to property**

This is not an exhaustive list

\*Staff on staff bullying does not fall within the context of this policy. Any such issues should be dealt with in accordance with BIOR's Bullying and Harassment Policy.



## 1.2 Definition – Lone Working

Lone working is intended to cover all work proposed to be undertaken alone where the risk to the individual lone worker may be increased either by work itself, or by the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong. However, it is important that these risks are not over-exaggerated, as this can have a detrimental effect, by endangering an unnecessary perception of fear amongst staff that is disproportionate to reality.

Lone working can occur:

- During normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace or on site
- Or
- When working outside normal working hours

Under both these circumstances, BIOR's guidance on lone working will apply

Staff may find themselves undertaking lone working in a variety of settings, which include:

- Employer premises
- Work alone in any given situation without direct access to other colleagues
- Travel alone using own vehicle, public transport and / or to and from any place of work
- Working alone at BIOR office 'after hours'

## 2 Policy Statement

BIOR acknowledges that there may be an increased risk to health and safety of its employees, and others when working alone. Risk assessments should be undertaken to identify risk to lone worker and measures introduced to minimise risks wherever reasonably practicable.

Managers shall ensure lone working situations are identified, appropriate risk assessments undertaken, control measures introduced, and employees are provided with the necessary information, instruction and training.

## 3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for managing all aspects of health and safety. This responsibility has been delegated to the Safeguarding officer. The Safeguarding Officer will ensure mechanisms are in place:

- To ensure any risk to a person's safety is adequately controlled and reduced to the lowest level; which is reasonably practicable.
- To ensure, where necessary, that appropriate risk assessments and safe systems of work are in place
- • To ensure that this policy is adhered to by staff and that resources are available to ensure effective implementation



### 3.1 Managers Responsibilities

- Promote and support the aims and objectives of this policy
- Maintain staffing levels and adequate cover when dealing with work related to violence and aggression. When there is the foreseeability of the likelihood of an incident occurring, to put into place immediate control measures to reduce the risk to the lowest level which is reasonably practicable.

### 3.2 Employee Responsibilities

All employees have a general duty to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

All employees must further ensure that they will:

- Cooperate with BIOR to enable it to meet its obligations in respect of the prevention of physical and non-physical assaults and the reduction of risks related to lone working.
- Be vigilant and ensure that any known or identified risks are immediately reported to their line manager as a minimum requirement.
- To be aware of our of hours arrangements and the details of the manager and directors so that immediate contact can be made in the event of an emergency (see appendix 3).
- Report any accident or incident in accordance with the provisions of the incident reporting procedure.
- Attend health and safety related training

## 4. Risk Assessment and Control

The policy for dealing with lone working is no different from other activities in that it involves risk assessment for the lone working activity.

The objective of the risk assessment is to ensure that satisfactory control measures are in place for such activities.

To simplify the procedures this guidance proposes that lone working can be arranged into three risk categories, namely low, medium and high and examples of these are given in tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively...but please note that these are not exhaustive lists and Divisions need to identify and organise their lone working activities into these categories.

**Table 1 – Low Risk Activity**

Risk Level	Activities	Control Measures
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People engaged in tasks they would normally undertake in their office and where the work does not involve use of dangerous machinery equipment or hazardous substances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lone work is permitted, but it is good practice to ensure that a second person is aware of the first person's location and they have access to means of communication.</li> <li>• Inspections/risk assessments of the work area should be undertaken by the to ensure hazards have been identified, risk controlled and provisions for emergencies are in place e.g. escape routes open, firefighting equipment, first aid, etc.</li> <li>• Induction training and health and safety information.</li> <li>• Staff are aware of the correct incident reporting procedures and are encouraged to report actual and near miss incidents.</li> </ul>

**Table 2 – Medium Risk Activity**

Risk Level	Activities	Control Measures
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with members of the public (interviews, consultation).</li> <li>• Handling money.</li> <li>• Working in areas that are difficult to locate and reach in an emergency.</li> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Lone worker suffered from illness that might increase risks of the job.</li> </ul>	<p>Essential requirement Follow low risk control measures and in addition consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rooms used for confidential interviews should be equipped with hidden alarm. Local violence and aggression procedures and on-the- job training given</li> <li>• Control Measures</li> <li>• Public access to office restricted</li> <li>• Appropriate communication should be maintained with the lone worker. The lone worker equipped by means of 2-way communication, a pager, mobile phone or personal alarm. A system should be in place detailing what to do if an alarm is activated.</li> </ul>

**Table 2 – Medium Risk Activity**

Risk Level	Activities	Control Measures
Medium		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional control measures to risk assessment (for normal hours) should be considered due to fewer personnel on site and availability of first aid. Control and reduce material employed, at least 2 personnel present. Restricting work to familiar operations. Informing a senior member of the group when work is finished.</li> </ul>

**Table 3 – High Risk Activity**

Risk Level	Activities	Control Measures
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation of specified dangerous machines</li> <li>Moving machinery</li> <li>Chemical with risk phrases R-6 (explosive), 12-17 (flammable), 19 (expensive peroxide) 23, 26-28, 32 (toxic), 34-35 (burns), 29-45 (serious irreversible effects, sensitisation, explosion, cancer).</li> <li>Working in confined spaces: tanks, ducts, ceiling voids etc.</li> <li>Use of ladder which cannot be secured and require 'footing' by a second person</li> <li>Erection of scaffolding</li> <li>Service of 'live' electrical materials</li> <li>Contact with potentially violent or aggressive tenants (identified via previous incident report forms).</li> <li>'High risk activities' as determined by management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>LONE WORKING IS NOT PERMITTED</b></li> </ul>



## 4.1 Selection and Consideration of Control Measures

Clearly, the types of control measures for a lone working activity will vary depending on the type of work, location, experience of worker and local conditions. The questions that need to be asked are:

1. Whether the risk of the work can be adequately controlled by one person, or are more people necessary?
2. Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
3. Is there a safe access and exit for that person?
4. Is the equipment safe and regularly maintained?
5. Is the lighting and ventilation enough?
6. Can substances and materials involved in the work be handled safely by one person? Hazardous substances which are subject to Control of Substances Regulations (COSHH) must be considered carefully and risk assessments undertaken.
7. Is the person medically fit to work alone or have special needs DDA?
8. Do lone workers fully understand the risk involved in the work?
9. Are limits set as to what can and cannot be done whilst working alone, when to stop and seek advice?
10. What is the appropriate level of supervision for the task? The extent of supervision required should be identified by managers.
11. Are there contingency plans in place should an alert/alarm be raised by the lone worker? Are these plans and procedures well known by staff and students?
12. Have arrangements been made for illness, accidents and emergencies?
13. Have employees received information, instruction and training?

## 5.0 Summary Policy Statement

Working alone is not illegal but it can bring additional risks to a work activity. BIOR has developed policies and procedures to control risks and protect employees, and employees should follow them. Apart from employees being sure that they can do the job on their own, the three most important things to be certain of are that:

- a. The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she is being exposed.
- b. A colleague or supervisor knows the whereabouts of a lone worker and what he or she is doing.
- c. The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong.

The activities within this guidance are not exhaustive, consequent risks should be effectively identified and managed by management.

The 'lone worker' is obligated to follow the outcomes of the risk assessment and consequent agreed procedures.

This guidance sets out the law, BIOR's and individual responsibility.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually or when it is considered appropriate to do so.



## 6.0 Information Sharing

It is important that staff have access to good quality information regarding contacts and locations so that they can do their job efficiently and safely.

Each manager should ensure that there is an appropriate flow of information to and from other sections, especially where there is a higher risk of assault from a tenant.

It is within the law to supply/obtain information such as where there are grounds to believe that an employee may be at risk from meeting a particular person on entering a particular premise.

This information should then be made available to all staff who may contact a particular person or attend a particular address.

Staff must also be aware that if, at any stage during a visit / while working on site, they feel unsafe, they should be reporting this to the manager who should update the information as necessary.

## 7.0 Apprentice/Employer Contact

Employees should never give out their home telephone number, personal mobile number or any other personal information.

## 8.0 Supporting Staff After an Incident

Debriefing will take place after serious incidents have occurred affecting personal safety, to establish the details of what happened and to provide emotional help to the staff involved. Managers will be involved in these debriefing sessions and, where appropriate, confidential counselling will be made available through the Occupational Health Service.

## 9.0 Control Points

One of the most important arrangements of this policy is the requirement for managers to know where their staff are up to until they go home, so that their movements can be traced if necessary.

It is equally important that this information is available for staff who are work out of home.


Furthermore, where an employer or Apprentice, address or area gives cause for concern, the employee should be able to advise any deviation from the planned itinerary.

These issues make it necessary from management to provide a Control Point. The Control Point could be any one of, or a mixture of, the following:

- A** The office, at all times staff are working alone
- B** An answerphone checked regularly
- C** Nominated person with mobile phone
- D** Nominated person at home

The Control Point would be the person or persons who should know the movements of all employees when the employee has expressed concern and which their movements to be monitored.





The Control Point would also have the details about the employee so that appropriate steps could be taken in the unlikely event of an employee failing to return to the office or call in at the end of a visit.

These details should include, for each employee, their:

- **Name**
- **Address, home telephone number and any emergency contact**
- **Mobile phone**
- **Time started work**
- **Itinerary of visits:**
- **Name, address and telephone number of each apprentice and employer**
- **The order of visits**
- **Expected time of finish, or call-in**
- **Car registration make and model**

## **10.0 Notification of Visits**

As previously mentioned it is the requirement of the management of health and safety at work regulations that employers are aware of their employees' movements, so far as is reasonably practicable, but without it being too onerous.

The method of notifying visits must be by agreement between managers and employees.

### **10.1 Notification of Changes to Visits**

Planned visits can sometimes be missed out for a variety of reasons. Whilst this does not cause a problem, there may be occasions where the employee feels that the control point should be notified of the change to itinerary.

The control point facility should cater for these occasions.

For example – housing officer may arrive at an address and have some concerns entering. The control point facility should allow for the employee to request additional person to attend, or at least register the time of entry and expected time of departure.

### **10.2 Notification to End visit**

It is equally important that BIOR know where and when an employee has finished work. The system employed must enable staff to call in at the end of the day.

If staff are still out on visits when one control point closes, the staff concerned must be aware of the control point to which they must report at the end of the day.

## **11.0 Training**

Staff working alone should know that their safety comes first. They should not be in situations which make them feel unsafe.

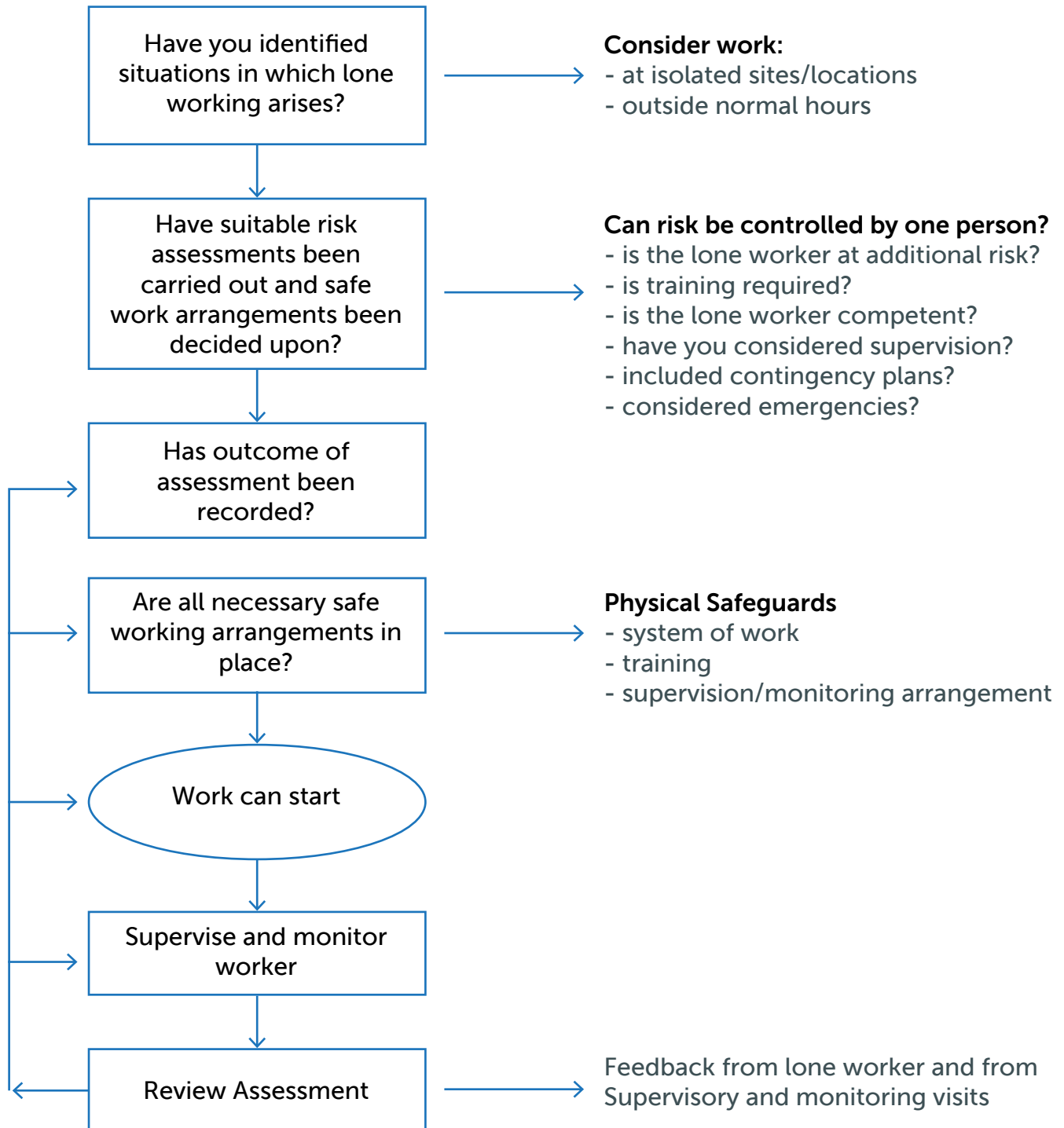
## 12.0 Monitoring, Audit and Review

The effectiveness of this by policy will be assessed by incident reporting and follow-up action of physical and non-physical assaults and incidents involving lone working. Accidents and incidents will be analysed by the Safeguarding Officer monthly.

This document will guide you on BIOR's policy for lone working; additional detailed guidance can be obtained from HSE books – Free publication 'Working Alone in Safety' INDG 73.

### Appendix 1

#### Summary Flowchart for Ensuring the Safety of Lone Workers





## Appendix 2

### Breakdown of vehicles/accidents

If your car breaks down:

- Stop vehicle where it is safe to do
- Turn on your hazard warning lights
- Always remember your own safety
- Call for assistance
- Keep your doors locked and the windows open no more than one-and-a-half inches
- If you leave the car, lock it and note its location. If you have a personal attack alarm, take it and keep it in your hand. If it is dark, or will be soon, take a torch
- Contact office/manager to inform them of the situation
- Contact employer to inform them of the delay/cancellation via office

If you are involved in an accident:

- You are legally required to stop if you collide with another person, car, property or livestock
- Check if anybody is injured
- If medical attention is required, summon help immediately

## Appendix 3

### Procedure in the Event of an Employee not Calling at the End of a Visit out of Work Hours

The following information should be at hand at the Control Point: -

- Name
- Address
- Home Telephone No.
- Mobile Telephone No.
- Emergency contact details
- Car details (registration, make, model, colour)
- Expected time of call-in
- List of addresses/telephone numbers for details of journey being undertaken

Initial response: -

The Control Point, after allowing reasonable time for an overdue call-in, should attempt to track the employee's movements by using the information above, until found.

Escalation:

If, however, at any time the Control Point becomes sufficiently concerned for the safety of an employee, an escalation procedure must be in place.

This escalation could be to: -

- Line manager
- Managing Director
- Directly to the Police

The police are happy to act on a 'missing person' with immediate effect providing BIOR has made every effort to trace the person concerned AND can justify their cause for concern.



## Appendix 4

### Entering an Employer Premises

- Stand well clear of the doorway after ringing or knocking
- Stand side on to the doorway to present a smaller target
- Show your I.D badge and identify yourself
- Check the identity of the person you are visiting by asking a question which requires them to tell you who they are - do not ask "are you Mr Jones?"
- Do not enter if anything gives you cause for concern re: the premises, e.g. anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol, potentially violent or abusive persons
- Follow the employer/Apprentice into the premises, remaining between them and the door as much as possible
- Keep aware of the movements of other people around the premises

## Appendix 5

### Travelling to or from BIOR Offices and Employer Premises

- Keep your car maintained and topped up with fuel
- Know where you are going as much as possible
- Allow plenty of time for your journey
- Drive defensively to avoid road rage incidents
- You may feel safer if you keep your doors locked whilst in the car
- Keep windows and sunroofs closed whilst in stationary or slow-moving traffic
- Hide bags, telephones and equipment as much as possible
- Park as near to the premises as possible
- Park in a well-lit area, preferably facing the direction you will need to leave in
- Be aware of the nearest place of safety (e.g. Police Station, shops or petrol station)
- Glance around before unlocking and opening your car door
- Lock the car door and make your way to the premises concerned avoiding subways, alleys and open land as much as possible
- When leaving the premises, have your car keys ready in your hand

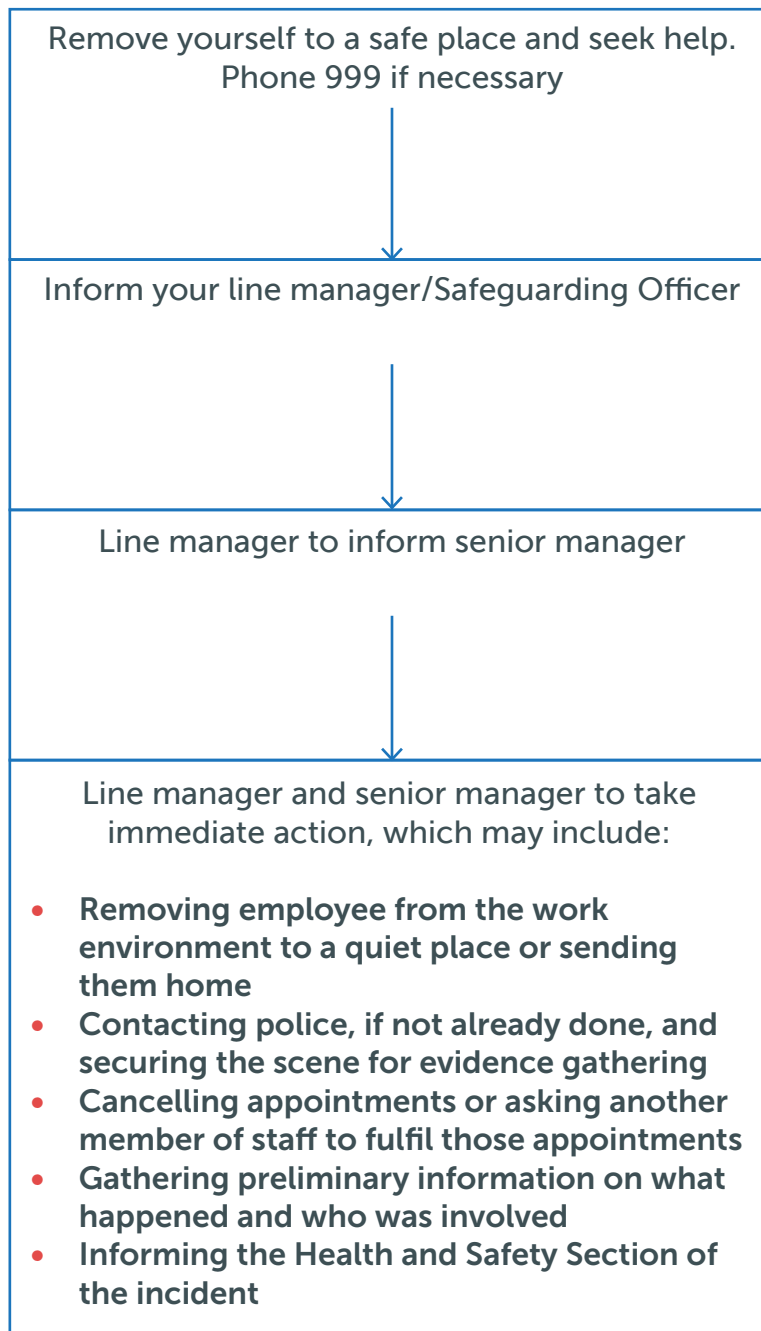
#### Note:

Always consider your own personal safety if you come across an incident/accident

- Be wary of people trying to flag you down by pointing at your car indicating that something is wrong. If the car seems in good working order to you, acknowledge their gesture and drive immediately to the nearest populated area to check the car

## Appendix 6

### What to do if a serious violent/aggressive incident occurs



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